# Lucia Heilman

Name of interviewee: Lucia Heilman
City: Vienna
Country: Austria
Interviewer: Tanja Eckstein
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*Dr. Lucia Heilman still lives in the apartment her mother received from the Russian commandant's office after the war.*

*She later lived in this apartment with her husband and raised her daughters there, so it contains many memories.*

*She felt more at home, however, with her husband in the smaller apartment on Semmerring.*

*She said that this apartment suited her better*

- My Family History
- My Childhood
- During the War
- After the War and later life
- Post-scripts

- **My Family History**

My grandfather, Josef Treister, my mother's father, was born in Debina in 1873. My grandmother Anna, née Friedmann, was born in Terebovlia in 1879. The lived in Ilavche, a small town near Terebovlia, which – just like Debina and Terebovlia, was in Galicia and part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

fter the collapse of the monarchy in 1918, the area belonged to Poland, then from 1939 to the Soviet Union, and, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, to Ukraine.

My grandparents owned a large estate in Ilavche where they lived with their three children, my mother Regina, who was born in 1900, her brother Arnold [Romek] who was born in 1901, and her brother Julian.

Julian was the youngest. He left the family in the early 1930s and lived in France. I first met him after the war. He was married and had three children that still live in France. One son is very religious.

In 1914, at the start of the First World War, the Cossacks attacked this part of Galicia and many people fled. Even my grandparents. Back then Vienna was the capital of the Austro-Hungarian

monarchy, and so my grandparents fled with their children to Vienna.

My mother was 14 years old at the time. In Vienna she went to High School on Albert-Gasse, in the 8th district, and finished her education with the school leaving exam. Just after the exam she began her studies in chemistry at the university. Since she didn't have any money for the doctorate fees, she received her doctorate shortly before my birth.

I never met my grandmother; she died in 1931 of heart failure. Her grave is located in the Central Cemetery, at Gate 4.

In Vienna in 1921 my mother married Leon Steinig, who was born in Terebovlia in 1898. That was long before my time. Back then they lived at Währinger-Strasse 110. Leon Steinig was a lawyer and I know that he held a high position at the League of Nations.

The League of Nations had the idea that they could make peace by asking wise people, who would say what you had to do so that peace reigned amongst the people. The most famous of these people at the time after the First World War were Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein.

And the League of Nations' idea was that Freud and Einstein should exchange letters and that these two clever minds should find out how to live together in peace in Europe. And Steinig was assigned to ask Freud to begin a correspondence with Einstein.

They then corresponded with each other a few times [*Note from the Internet: In 1932 the League of Nations asked Albert Einstein to begin a public exchange of ideas with a person of his choosing on a topic of his choice. The physician chose the topic of war and Sigmund Freud as conversation partner.*

*In July 1932 there was single written exchange between the world-renowned physicist and the father of psychoanalysis on the topic of war. Einstein's central question in his short letter was: Is it possible to direct the psychic development of man, so that he is more resistant to the psychoses of hate and destruction?*

*Sigmund Freud's lengthy reply followed in December and appeared rather pessimistic. He didn't see any chance of success in wanting to remove aggressive tendencies, but added at the end of his letter:*

*Maybe it isn't a utopic hope that the influence of both moments – the cultural attitude and the justified fear of the effects of a future war – will bring an end to the waging or war in the foreseeable future. And Freud the skeptic would be proven right. In 1933, when the epistolary exchange appeared in a small circulation, the unmistakable signs of war emerged again with Hitler's take-over of power.*]

My mother was very modern and of the opinion that you should tell children everything respective to truth from the start. That's why I know that in 1923 my mother had a boy, Martin Elia Steinig. She delivered him in Vienna and when he was just a few months old she went with her husband and the child to Poland, where she was born. She wanted to see was left over from the property as well as the large estate after the war.

There was nothing there. The houses and fields were destroyed; they couldn't find anything. There the child came down with dysentery, which is a horrible plague. My mother quickly went back to Vienna with the child and he went immediately to a pediatric hospital.

She couldn't even really visit him, since the illness is very contagious. The child died at the age of eight months. My mother told me everything and blamed herself, since she felt guilty for the death of her child.

- **My Childhood**

I know that Steinig cheated on my mother; she told me that as well. They were only divorced in 1933. So I was born out of wedlock into a marital union, since I was born in Vienna on 25 July 1929 as Lucia Johanna Treister.

My father was called Rudolf Kraus. He wasn't Jewish; my parents weren't married and didn't live together. My mother and I lived with my grandfather and Fritz Hildebrand, my mother's boyfriend, who also wasn't Jewish, in an apartment at Pappenheim-Gasse 6 in the 20th district. That was a very small apartment: room, kitchen, cabinet [*a small room*].

My grandfather slept in the cabinet; my mother, Fritz and I slept in the room where there was a bed, a sofa, and a child's bed. The kitchen was also a bathroom, the toilet was in the hall, and the water was in a bassena [*a public water fountain in the hall*], also in the hall. My mother married Fritz after the war. I had a very bad relationship with him: he never liked me, I never liked him.

Several Jewish families lived in the house on Pappenheim-Gasse – I remember, because I played with Jewish children from the building. The Dankner family lived below us with four children, who I was always good friends with.

One girl, Ernestine, Erna she was called, was just three years older than me. I always played with her. I also played with a lot of other children from the neighborhood: hopscotch, catch, and hide-and-go-seek. I also remember ball games.

We would throw the ball against a wall and then we'd clap or hands or you'd have to turn around before the ball came back and needed to be caught again. And I can remember that we dug holes in the sidewalk and played with marbles. The marbles came in different colors, also out of glass. That was always something really special when you won.

There were still horse-drawn carts back then. I can remember that so well because the wheel of a horse-drawn carriage once ran over my foot. That hurt a lot, but nothing happened; children's bones are still soft.

My father visited us every week and really cared about me. He played with me for the couple of hours he was with me in our apartment. And he always came on my birthday and brought me very lovely presents. I remember a doll and a sewing machine.

My father's mother lived in the 2nd district, on Engerth-strasse. She was a sewing teacher. My mother and I were rarely at her place; we were there on Easter and on Christmas. Once on Easter I received a white egg made of sugar that you could look inside. On Christmas there was a

Christmas tree and good food.

Shorty after my birth my mother was given a position in the Laiz Hospital [*Part of the 13th district in Vienna*]. The hospital was one hour from our apartment. She needed to get up at seven in the morning and would arrive back home at seven at night. Since you had to work Saturdays in those days, I only had my mother on Sundays, and there were 14 days of vacation a year. At first we were much to poor to go on vacation, but when I was older we went to Rekawinkel [*Lower Austria*].

My mother worked a lot and in a very responsible career. That is very difficult for a woman, and when she came home she still had to buy and cook everything. But my mother had a lot of energy. Her friends came to visit every evening. She would make tea and her friends usually brought something to eat, since she couldn't offer anything as we were too poor.

They ate together and chatted. Those were Jewish and non-Jewish friends and no one ever talked about that one being a Jewish friend and that one a Christian friend. There were really a lot of friends, and it was so casual that people just came. They didn't call ahead, as is common today. The door was open to everyone.

My mother was exceptionally talented at attracting people. That's how it was her whole life. She was very social, temperamental, and friendly, so that the men also liked her. By the time my mother was very old and fragile and living on Josefstädter-Strasse, she couldn't really receive her visitors at home anymore. She had a regular's table at Café Hummel and was a well-known figure there. She went there every day at three. Of course she knew the manager and all the waiters and the owner, Mr. Hummel.

She at there and received guests there. The Hummel was always a very popular café, and when she didn't have anyone and saw that someone had come in and was looking around for seat, she would wave to them and say, "Come, sit with me, there's space next to me." And before they could even sit down she would begin to question them in a nice way and, after an hour, would know everything about them.

She really could do that; she had the talent of asking the right questions. The people always told her their whole story. You could sense immediately that there was really something interesting behind it. She was a very exceptional person.

My grandfather would look after me all day. He spoke Yiddish, so that I remember Yiddish well. We went for walks on the Danube Canal, he read books aloud to me, and told very good stories. I loved it when he told me stories. Each time he asked, "Should I tell you about heaven or hell?" I always wanted him to talk about hell.

He also sang from operettas. My grandfather was a religious man and regularly went to synagogue. I don't remember which one, but it was a large synagogue. He often brought me with him to the synagogue.

From time to time we visited my Uncle Arnold, the pharmacist, and his family. They were very well off people. His wife's name was Cecylia. She was from Borszczow, Bortschoff in Yiddish, and her maiden name was Friedmann.

The town is also in Ukraine today, but until 1918 it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. My uncle and his wife had a daughter, Renate, who was three years younger than me. I remember that Renate had nice toys, such as a doll carriage and lots of things I didn't have.

I was naturally very jealous. Uncle lived at Lugeck 1. I don't know where the pharmacy was. He owned the pharmacy with a co-partner. He earned good money, and after Grandfather started living with us my mother went to him every month and asked him to contribute something to Grandfather's livelihood.

I remember there were always arguments. He was not very generous and only wanted to contribute the minimum to his father. And since my mother was the sole wage earner for her family and for her boyfriend Fritz, who was unemployed for a time, every penny was important, which she often argued about with him.

As a child you don't get this, of course. Fritz, my mother's boyfriend, was a carpenter; I think he was unemployed until 1937. Then he got a position as a lab worker in the Auersperg Sanatorium.

In 1935 I started school on Gerhardus-Gasse, in the 20th district. There were a lot of Jewish children in my class. The religion classes were divided, but otherwise that wasn't an issue. I believe I was very good in school, but not remarkable.

I really liked going to school after 1945. In 1937 my mother, Fritz and I relocated to the 9th district, to Berg-Gasse 36. With compensation my mother rented the apartment, which was on the 4th floor. There were two rooms there and I got my own room.

There was also a bathroom in the apartment. At that time we had a housemaid, since my grandfather remained in the apartment in Pappenheim-Gasse. I can barely remember the housemaid, but I was told that she once sat me on the windowsill so that I could look out. Even though she held on to me, it was of course dangerous. She wasn't with us very long, since Christian housemaids weren't allowed to work for Jewish families when Hitler came.

After we changed apartments I went to elementary school on Serviten-Gasse. Then Hitler came in 1938. When Schuschnigg gave his speech on the evening of 11 March 1938 we already had a radio and my mother listened to the speech and was very distraught and frantic, and she didn't know what she should do.

On 12 March German troops marched into Austria. I was eight years old and, as far as I remember, went by myself to Helden-Platz, since there was an event there. And as I reached the vicinity of Helden-Platz I couldn't go any further – there were so many people on the Ring Road and on the side streets. And I stood there and heard the yells, the roaring, and this cry, "Heil, Heil, Heil…" and I knew that I didn't belong there.

I found these cries and this atmosphere very threatening, immensely threatening. I stood there for a while, listened, and saw people climbing trees so they could get a better look. And the cries didn't stop. Then I left under the force of the threat I was sensing, and came home completely distraught.

A short time later the director of the school came into the class and said that the Jewish children had to leave the class. Then we took our schoolbags, put away our pencil cases and notebooks, and left the class. That felt like a terrible humiliation.

Exclusion from the classroom, an expulsion, for reasons incomprehensible to me. I share that with all children that have been kicked out of school. This humiliation accompanied us as children and up to the present day.

From that point forward we Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend school like other children. They set up special classes and schools for us. One of those schools was on Börse-Gasse, where I went. But there were only lessons “of a sort” there, since we didn’t have any qualified teachers.

After school we always liked going to Schlick Park. I wanted to keep going to the park, since children play in parks after all. I remember we went from our school on Börse-Gasse to Schlick Park, and on all the benches it was written, “Only for Aryans.” The effort they put into writing that on every bench, “Only for Aryans.”

Jewish children weren’t actually allowed to enter the park any more. So then we played in the streets nearby. There were of course Christian children there as well. I was nine, ten years old at the time and the Christian boys made a sport of chasing the Jewish girls, throwing them down and hitting them.

So I was often afraid of even going out on the street, because I was afraid the boys would attack me. It was easier before the stars, since the boys couldn’t easily recognize the Jewish children yet. But then, when all the Children had to wear a star, it was dangerous. Sometimes I go to schools as a contemporary witness and once a student asked me, “Why did you wear the star, why didn’t you hide it?”

This showed me that people today couldn’t imagine the fear that we had. I would have never dared leave the house without the star, out of fear that the janitor or someone else who knew I had to wear a Star of David would see me and report me immediately. We would have been sent to prison immediately. We never thought of doing something like that – not wearing or hiding the star – out of fear.

I still had an entrance exam for the Chajes High School [*A Jewish school*], which I remember. I then went for half a year to the Chajes High School on Castellez-Gasse. But there weren’t any proper lessons any more.

Fritz, my mother’s boyfriend, had to move out, since we were a Jewish family and it would have been racial defilement to live with my mother. He took a sublet room, but remained in touch with my mother. I don’t know what he later knew about our whereabouts.

When the war began he was drafted into the military. I seem to recall that my mother once received a postcard from him, and he wrote enthusiastically, “We’re at the Eiffel Tower.” I think he was an enthusiastic soldier.

It was so that you needed money to have any chance of fleeing. And being a very poor family, we had no money. I can remember we later received an entry permit for America, an affidavit. I don't know who the affidavit was from, but I assume it was from the chemist, Dr. Erwin Tramer, who was a friend of my mother's.

Now we needed tickets for the ship. Only then did Hitler allow you to exit. We had the exit permit, but no ship tickets, and since we didn't have any money my mother asked her Jewish friends – she did have that large circle of friends – if they could lend her money. People still thought of borrowing money back then. But she couldn't gather the money for the ship tickets.

My mother learned about the Kindertransports and we considered whether she should sign me up so that I could get away. But then she didn't have the heart to send her only child – after already having lost a child – away to foreign people in a foreign country. She didn't bring it about. And when the transports began she felt guilty again for not having at least saved her child. And then she did everything she could to keep us from being deported.

My father tried to get us out of Austria. That's why he had himself transferred by Siemens, where he was working, to Iran, and worked in Iran as a lighting engineer for Siemens. He wanted to help us with entry into Iran.

In Iran he was given the assignment of building lighting equipment for a trotting course. But by this time the war had started. By the time the English and Russians invaded neutral Iran, a ceasefire treaty had been arranged.

This made my father an enemy foreigner and he was interned with many others and then brought to Australia. At first he was in an internment camp there for a short time. Then he was released and established himself as a math teacher in a small city, in Castlemaine. He was provided with a house. Everyone there lived like that – everyone in a house with a yard.

We never saw my father's family again; everyone was frightened. My father's mother died in 1945.

My mother lost her position in Lainz, and then our apartment was commandeered. One day a couple came and looked at our apartment. They liked it, and we had to get out within 14 days. We needed move into a collection apartment, which was at Berg-Gasse 20 with 20 people crowded together and only one kitchen and bathroom. Those were horrible conditions. We were naturally not allowed to bring anything from our apartment. The Nazis took everything.

- **During the War**

In 1938 my grandfather was still living on Pappenheim-Gasse. Then Hitler said that people had to take in their parents, so then my grandfather lived with us again. I can still clearly remember how the SS took my grandfather from Berg-Gasse to Buchenwald [*Buchenwald concentration camp, close to the city of Weimar, Germany*]. That was a horrible experience. SS officers dressed in black came to the door of our apartment; it was evening, but you could still see into the courtyard.

My grandfather suddenly seemed incredibly old to me. He was wearing a thick winter coat, had a small suitcase in his hand, and SS officers to his left and right marched with him through the courtyard.

I had spent my whole life with my grandfather. I was closer to him than anyone else, since he was always with me. He was the one who looked after me, he was my playmate. There it was again – the threat. And everyone – even me – knew that we would never ever see him again.

My grandfather was interned in the Prater [*a large park in Vienna*], in the soccer stadium, with other men – only men were being collected at that time. It was communicated to my mother that she was allowed to bring him something to wear.

What she was allowed to bring was prescribed. With a little suitcase that had his name written on it we positioned ourselves by the stadium to hand over his things. While we stood there in line, we weren't allowed to speak and could only barely move. Whoever misbehaved would be pushed or beaten by the stewards, or even the SS men. It was terrible!

Those are the worst experiences for a child – when you see your own mother being beaten by others, when you're helplessly at the mercy of other people. We handed over the suitcase for Grandfather and shortly thereafter the people in the stadium were transported to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

My mother – and even I – knew that the people would be murdered, and I would argue that all of Vienna knew, and even hoped, that those people being deported would never come back. They might not have known at the very start, but from 1941, when the transports started, everyone knew they were being sent to their deaths. And the so-called Aryans stole everything from the deportees, so of course they didn't want them to come back ever. And then the telegram arrived with my grandfather's death certificate. He died on 23 October 1939 in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

In 1941 the transports from the collection apartments began. That means that trucks drove up in front of the buildings and everyone living there needed to board the trucks and were deported; first to one of the collection camps, like the one on Castellez-Gasse, for example, and then onward to the ghettos, concentration and death camps.

My friend Erna Dankner, who I'd always played with, was deported in 1942 with her parents, Sarah and Moshe, to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz, where she and her parents were murdered. I know that her brother Sami and her sister Hannah survived because they filled out a memorial pages for their parents and sister at Yad Vashem [*Holocaust memorial site in Jerusalem*].

Reinhold Duschka was my father's best friend. My parents were already friends with him in their youth and in a youth organization. I know what kind of guy he was. They went hiking together, sang together, discussed god and the world – they ways that young people back then spent their free time together. And my mother even met my father in this youth group. And Reinhold and my father always went rock climbing together. They climbed all kids of mountains - they conquered these rocks properly with ropes. They went rock climbing every Sunday.

Reinhold continued to visit us regularly after Hitler's invasion. Of course he was also afraid, but he came anyway. When the transports began Reinhold came and offered to hide my mother and me. He didn't want to see the child of his best friend murdered.

My mother was happy that he was courageous enough to take on this danger. I think there were only a few people in Vienna as courageous as Reinhold. There were 88 in all of Austria.

Reinhold had a small apartment near Hietzing [*Vienna's 13th district*] where he lived, and a workshop at Mollard-Gasse 85a. 85a isn't an apartment building, but is rather, to this day, an industrial building. In the large house there are five floors where there are only workshops: for wood, a violinmaker had his workshop there, and for metal.

I remember one workshop where they made enamel products. Reinhold had a metal shop and was very artistic in that he made very lovely metal objects. He made things out of brass, copper, and silver. The silver objects were very expensive, even the dust from filing was expensive and would be gathered up.

He shaped them with hammers; he had different shaped hammers he used make art. The base was soldered. I learned how to solder and was then "the solderer." He made vases in all shapes and sizes, beautiful copper objects, fruit bowls and ashtrays. He even made bracelets. The objects were mainly ordered, meaning that customers would come and say, I need ten vases in this or that size.

His workshop was also a kind of gallery space where all of his beautiful arts-and-crafts objects could be seen. Reinhold also studied with the renowned architect and designer Josef Hoffmann at the arts college. He was very talented. His buyers were the Wiener Werkstätte – before the 1932 bankruptcy – and businesses. Even private customers bought objects from him. Later he couldn't get any more copper sheet, since they needed it for armaments. He then worked with sheet aluminum.

He hid us in the workshop. He built for us a kind of shed, so that if someone came into the workshop – and various people did come: customers, the mailman, and deliverers – and if someone rang the door we crawled into the shed.

The shed was made of wood and was like a very, very large and long box. We had mattresses and blankets and could sleep there. No one suspected that people were hiding in there. When someone was in the workshop we needed to be very quiet of course, couldn't cough, and Reinhold would try to usher the person out as quickly as possible. He kept us all those years.

My mother and I worked with him, and the more we worked, the more objects he could produce and sell and, with this money, provide us with food. Back then he had connections to a grocery store, which always sold him expensive products under the counter.

We always had bread. We were in the workshop during the day, and when someone rang, we crept into the shed very quickly. Reinhold was something like my father for those four years.

Difficult times naturally bind people together. He did everything to help me; he played, for example, board games with me and borrowed books for me. He taught me a lot, but I didn't have the talent for artistic copy.

But I welded and hammered and prepared objects and he shaped them. It was a blessing that I had something to do. Over the course of those years mother never went outside, but I was a child. It's a lot more difficult to keep a child in a workshop, because the need to move is greater. You can't run

in a workshop, you can do athletic exercises, but you can't run.

When my mother and Reinhold saw that I couldn't stand it anymore and that I'd go crazy if they didn't let me out, then they would let me out. That was very dangerous, since a child must be in school. But no one ever asked me. I ran as far as Grinzig. I ran up the Cobenzl [*a 492m-tall hill in Vienna's 19th district*], ran down through the Vienna Woods, everything on the double. I can remember three or four times in four years. I didn't have any orientation problems or fear. Strangely enough, I am a person with little fear, even today.

I almost like to describe it as careless. I was afraid in the workshop when the doorbell would ring. Even today I still find it unpleasant when the doorbell rings. This is a matter of a short moment, but it has stayed with me. Otherwise I'm rather fearless.

You can imagine the sort of desperate situation my mother was in that she allowed me to leave our hiding place. She must have been incredibly afraid for me.

I had a map in the workshop and I marked where Hitler was with his soldiers with pins. We also had a radio, a Volksempfänger [*a type of radio receiver*], so that we could listen to the news. There were only success for the first years of the war, and I marked them with pins on the map until German troops were 50 kilometers outside Moscow.

I was in the Soviet Union once after the war, and someone had marked the place. 50 kilometers – that's no further than from Vienna to Baden. But then the Germans had to turn back. I also marked that with pins, of course.

In March 1944 the air raids began in Vienna. I don't know what my mother felt, but I felt joy. Almost every day around 11 there was advance warning that the airplanes were coming to bomb Vienna. That was announced on the radio.

The people could prepare for the attack, and whoever could, went into an air-raid shelter. We didn't dare go into the cellar, because if we had gone, then someone would have asked for identification and where we're from.

One day in November there was an air-raid alarm on a Sunday. My mother said, "today we'll go; today there won't be anyone in the cellar, since the people from the workshops aren't working and if someone asks us we'll talk ourselves out of it." The workshops were on the fourth floor and we went down the stairs. By the time we reached the basement the bombs were already falling.

A bomb even fell in the workshop courtyard. Like very Sunday, Reinhold was climbing in the mountains. Before we reached the cellar, another bomb fell, and we were completely covered in dust. We couldn't see anything and moved through the dust and there were maybe 10 minutes between the craters made by the bombs. We tried to squat down, we didn't see anyone else because there was no visibility. After some time it calmed down, the airplanes disappeared.

We saw in the courtyard that the fifth floor of the house was gone, there was no more roof, and flames were leaping out the fourth floor. So we knew we couldn't go back. The workshop, our accommodations, our hiding place, were burnt. We couldn't leave.

Finally Reinhold came. We were all happy to be alive. Then Reinhold said: it's very cold, but we need to go to Hütteldof [*part of Vienna's 14th district*] to his summerhouse. We were familiar with the summerhouse, since before the war Reinhold would often invite us in summer.

There definitely won't be anyone there, that's good, so no one will see us when we arrive. On the other hand, if someone does see us we'll be exposed, since there are no people in this settlement at this time of year.

Luckily there was chaos and many homeless people were wandering around. So we went there together on foot with nothing– the trams weren't operating since the tracks had also been bombed – and spent the night there. It was November, it was freezing, it was a summerhouse – there was nothing to cover up with and there was also no heating.

The next day Reinhold and my mother decided we would go back in order to see if we could use anything, maybe not everything had been burned. The most important thing for us were the tools. Maybe we would find some tools in the debris. So we all went to Mollard-Gasse.

The conditions were chaotic; no one paid you any mind. A sort of kitchen had been set up in order to give the homeless people something to eat. I remember the soup, which tasted so good.

When we were in the stairwell we saw that the steps hadn't been damaged. When we got upstairs we couldn't see where the workshop had been, since the debris from the roof lay on the fourth floor, burnt and crumbled. Then Reinhold located where the workshop had been and we began to look.

The floor was still there; otherwise everything was full of debris. We needed to push the rubble away with our hands. And then we really did find the hammers, but without handles, since they'd been burned by phosphorus bombs, which burn everything to ash.

The metal parts were still intact. We squatted down and looked for anything of use in the wet debris – the firemen had fought the flames. Suddenly my mother found a prayer book. As we had begun to hide, she had brought various things to Reinhold's including four of my grandfather's prayer books for the Jewish holidays. She had hidden the prayer books deep down.

My mother was horrified –if a fireman had found them, it doesn't bear contemplating! I have one of them, it was actually in good condition save for the edges and the cover, which were charred. I don't know how they survived. A wonder!

We didn't know where to go. We put all the salvaged things in a corner and went back to the house in Hütteldorf. It was fairly high up, on Wolfersberg, and had a large window. I stood there and watched Vienna burning. And I was really happy that Vienna was burning. I felt like Nero. Nero had set fire to Rome. I was Nero and Vienna was burning.

Even my things were all burnt. I still had teddy bears at Reinhold's; everything was burnt. I was 15 then – already 3 years in hiding.

The next day Reinhold tried to find an alternative to his workshop. A friend of his had a shop on Gumpendorfer Strasse [*near to the first hiding palce*] he wasn't using and gave it to Reinhold.

For two or three nights we slept in the horrible cold in Hütteldorf. I didn't get sick the entire time, but my mother had a bad flu once. She lay in the shed on Mollard-Gasse and it kept getting worse. She discussed with Reinhold what happens if she dies. She suggested, if she really does die, that he cut her up and bury the pieces in the garden of his garden house. I heard all of that; it was really, really terrible.

There was a large oven in the shop on Gumpendorfer Strasse, and it also had a basement section for wood and coal. First Reinhold heated up the oven so that we could warm up a little, then we took a look at the basement section, and that's where we sat in the dark, since the place had a large display window meaning we couldn't stay there. And once the heating supplies became limited, Reinhold collected lumber on Gumpendorfer Strasse.

There had also been a rain of bombs on Gumpendorfer Strasse and many houses were destroyed, so wood was lying in the street. The wood made the oven very hot. We needed to sit in the basement, but when it got too cold for us we went upstairs to warm up.

This time from November 1944 until April 1945 was very, very hard for me. I became depressed and unresponsive, so that my mother was frightened for me. This time was so difficult for me that I didn't speak anymore. The dark cellar, the cold, nothing to do but sit very, very still in the basement, since other people were coming into the cellar. That was unbearable for me

On 13 April Reinhold came and collected us. He saw Russian soldiers. We left our hiding place very carefully and full of fear and saw Russian soldiers marching down Gumpendorfer Strasse. Thousands…madness… yes, thousands!

It's a feeling you can't describe, how the Russians came and I was finally freed. An incredibly exhilarating feeling! I was happy, I was blessed, I could finally run where I wanted, and I could sit on every park bench.

- **After the War and later life**

My uncle, Arnold Treister, my mother's brother, fled with his wife and their daughter Renate to France. His wife and daughter survived. My uncle was turned in by the French and deported from Drancy – that is 20km east of Paris and was a collection and transit camp – to Poland, and in Poland he was murdered in the Sobibor or Majdanek death camp.

I told my story for the first time in 1994 to the Israeli photographer Alisa Douer for the film, "He who saves a single life, saves the entire world," a verse from the Talmud. Even my husband barely said anything about his story to our daughters. We didn't have time to tell – school, our work, our travels…

My daughters knew that Reinhold had hid my mother and me. They knew Reinhold, since we were always friends with him, but they didn't know exactly. And in 1994 they were already grown up. I found talking about this time in 1994 was very, very difficult.

I couldn't talk for more than 20 minutes before feeling like I was going to suffocate. I was choking. Alisa understood that of course, and would always say: I'll come back tomorrow.

Afterwards my older daughter – she was born in 1955 – said to me that she is a damaged child because of my story, a child of the second generation. She feels different than others; it doesn't matter if I told it to her or not. She had the feeling it had been carried over.

At first we still lived in the shop. Then my mother was able to get a furnished, unoccupied apartment on Albert-Gasse through a Russian commandant's office in the 8th district. The apartment had belonged to a fairly high-up Nazi who had fled to western Austria.

The most important thing for my mother and me were documents, since we were left without documents. My mother went to city hall and there was no problem getting our birth certificates and citizenship documents in no time. The next step was work. We needed money, since we had nothing.

We would wash our things in the evening and put them on again in the morning. Sometimes they were still damp, but those were trivialities. Without money – that was difficult. So my mother went with me to the hospital in Lainz, since my mother had worked there until 1938.

The trams were still not running and we couldn't have ridden with anyone, since the streets were still destroyed. So we walked. At the head office my mother demanded her position back. They told her it was impossible, since someone else had the position.

When we went back we met the well-known actor Paul Hörbiger. Hörbiger was so well known that even I knew him. He was also walking and told us that he was in a resistance group. Then my mother asked persistently in the town hall and demanded her position, and since the Russians were in Vienna and a lot of people were afraid of the Russians, my mother was able to get her position back. But since the hospital didn't want to fire her replacement, so they shared the laboratory.

So my mother worked side-by-side with this woman. They shared the work and my mother took over taking blood samples and determining blood sugar levels. That's how my mother began earning money for us again.

The war was over in April and in June the schools were open again. There was a girls' high school on Albert-Gasse. My mother went with me to the director – she was new, since the school had to dismiss the old Nazi director. My mother talked the whole time.

I had gone to primary school for four years and then nothing. The director suggested that they register me with my age group for the first months, and then we'll see. If it didn't work, they could always put me in a lower lever. So I arrived to the 4th high school class.

The director said there were also a lot of teachers that would be glad to give after-school help and that we should take some of these teachers for math and English, since those were subjects you needed to learn from the start.

So I went to school. Alone the feeling of being able to go to school was unbelievable; I didn't walk, I hopped. I received tutoring, particularly in math. I woke up every morning between 4:30 and 5, sometimes it was freezing in the apartment since there were problems with heating after the war, and studied intensively and concertedly.

After studying I was so hungry that I absorbed everything like a sponge. I didn't have to study so much for the regular lessons, because I could do it automatically, I memorized everything. It was very hard the first year, especially in math and English. But the teachers forgave me for that, since they saw how much effort I put in. By the third year I was already one of the best.

I was exotic at school – the only Jew. There were still Nazi instructors that tried to treat me unfairly, but at least the children were all the nicer to me for it. They compensated for the unfair treatment with exceptional friendliness. I never had issues with the children; they liked me from the very start.

I was well integrated into the class. I was tasked with erasing the board and loved it. No one wanted to do that, but that was the definition of school for me. I sat in the second row the whole time.

The best pupil sat next to me – a very nice girl. Orthography was difficult for me, since that's something you learn over the years. When we wrote essays I was always done very quickly and she improved my spelling under the table. I always went home to study after school.

That's how it was until the end. And my mother always supported me. She paid for all the tutors and did everything so that I could learn. No one asked about my story and I didn't say anything. That chapter was closed, suppressed, behind me. I studied day and night and finished my exams at the age of 18.

My mother's boyfriend – whom she married in 1946 – lived on Josefstädter-Strasse and they lived temporarily and not very harmoniously together. My mother's relation to Fritz was the sort that all her friends and relatives didn't understand how she could even be friends with him.

My mother's Jewish friends were all gone after the war. They had either fled or were murdered. I can remember that she was in touch with friends that had fled to the USA. But since my mother was so social it didn't take long until she had a large circle of friends. And then they would all come by our apartment.

After my High School exams I wanted to study medicine. I wanted to every since I was a child. Then I enrolled in Vienna and took the first exams in physics and chemistry. Then I received the authorization to leave for Australia.

After these experiences in Austria during the Holocaust I had the feeling that I couldn't stay. It's impossible for a Jewish person to keep living with Nazis in the neighborhood and with the population's sympathies.

I wanted to go to another country in order to put these people behind me. In my eyes they all had blood on their hands and that was a reason to emigrate. Australia was an option because my father was there. But my mother didn't want to go to Australia and she didn't want to emigrate.

Back then you needed to have an entry permit. And then you had to pay for part of the ship tickets. It was an emigrant ship, since a lot of people were emigrating at that time, and there was a Jewish-American aid organization – the Joint – that paid for a large portion of my trip.

At that time I had just met a man. He wanted to immigrate with me to Australia. I was to travel first, have a look around, and then I was supposed to obtain an entry permit for him and he would then follow.

When I was in my 7th year at the school, my future husband, Alfred Heilman, was standing in front of our door one day. He wanted to visit my mother.

He was born in Lviv. He had six siblings: Henje, Rosa, Dora, Lina, Philipp, and Wolf. The family lived in Lemberg before the war and my husband went to a school there where they also taught German. After his exams he couldn't study because there was a numerus clausus for Jews in Poland.

So she studied bookbinding. Then the war came. Shortly before then Hitler and Stalin had signed a secret pact – the Hitler-Stalin pact. Then the Russians and Germans divided Poland. The Russians invaded Lviv.

When the Germans invaded Lviv in June 1941, my husband fled to the Soviet Union and became a soldier with the Polish armed forces. This army fought with the Allied forces. In 1943 my husband fought in Crimea against the Germans as a combat medic, during which time he pulled a Russian soldier, who was badly injured, out of the clashes and brought him to a medical post.

This man was Jewish and after the war spent a long time looking for my husband and found him. That was very difficult, since my husband had two surnames. His parents had been married in the Jewish community but not at the registry office, so the children were named Rittner after their mother.

After the war all six took on their father's name, Heilman. I think it was in the 1960s when he found my husband. His last name was Kofel and we visited him several times in Haifa. We always called him "the saved." As both he and my husband were already dead, I still met up with his wife in Haifa whenever I was in Israel.

I don't know why my husband left the army or was otherwise discharged. He then worked in a foundry in Sverdlovsk, in Siberia, under very poor conditions. After he had met the factory director's wife and they fell in love, she sponsored him and saw to it that he could attend a technical college.

He studied there until the end of the war. After the war he wanted to look for his family in Lviv. His siblings had had Christian friends from sports - all his siblings were very athletic and had been members of a sports club for years.

They got papers from some of their friends from the sports club. When the siblings had to separate they arranged to leave notifications about their whereabouts with the caretaker of their house in Lviv after the war. With permission from the university, my husband left for Lviv to find his siblings.

The house was there and the caretaker really did have news. They all survived – some in Germany as forced laborers. They had arranged to meet in the city of Bytom. My husband forwent the continuation of his studies and met with his siblings in Bytom. Their parents were gone; they had been murdered.

Philipp, the eldest brother, had rented an apartment, but they didn't want to stay there. They decided to immigrate to South America and tried to get an entry permit. During this waiting period my husband found work as a waiter in a small coffeehouse.

They stayed in Bytom for around a year, then they all left for Vienna. Back then Vienna was a transit station for refugees between old and new homelands. When my husband bid goodbye to the owner of the coffeehouse and said that he was going to Vienna, he said, "oh, if you're going to Vienna, then be a dear and give my regards to a distant cousin I have there and tell her about me."

When they arrived in Vienna they lived in a hotel on Heine-Strasse that was set up for refugees. One day my husband took the address and went looking for his boss's relative.

This relative was my mother. And so one day he stood outside the door to our apartment. My mother – the hospitable woman that she was – invited him to dinner and walked around with him a bit through Vienna. Then she said, "my daughter isn't here at the moment, but you can meet her in a week." And that was that! Unbelievable!

When I saw my husband for the first time I just looked at him and was already in love. It wasn't any different for him, he also fell in love with me immediately. I was still very young – just 17 – and he was 26 and already a mature man. Despite my experiences, I was still a young girl. I felt very grown up, but wasn't of course. My husband couldn't speak very good German, but he had to speak German with me, since I couldn't speak Polish. That definitely helped him to learn German quickly. He made it happen it within a year.

Then his siblings' entry to Bolivia was approved. My husband wanted to stay here of course; firstly, because he was in love with me and secondly, because of the prospect of studying engineering in Vienna.

His sisters Henje and Rosa had met French prisoners of war during the war and wanted to go to France to look for them. So the siblings split up. My husband stayed in Vienna and Henje and Rosa went to Paris, looked for their boyfriends, found them, and married.

Dora, the third sister, also went to Paris even though she didn't have a boyfriend there, and Philipp, the eldest brother, didn't want to leave the sisters alone and accompanied them. Only Wolf went to Bolivia. He took a female friend, married her, and stayed in Bolivia.

Dora became severely ill with tuberculosis. Her brother Philipp did everything to save her. They sent her to the south of France, to Briancon, a mountain town with sanatoriums. Philipp was a very industrious man. He began working immediately in Paris and financed everything for his sister. She even underwent an operation; they took out the lesion but even then she still wasn't completely healthy.

My husband enrolled at the Technical University here. He didn't have any money and had to stay afloat with only occasional work. He was then able to afford a sublet, but he was still poor. And then we had to separate, since the time had come for my trip to Australia, which had already been arranged for a long time.

First I went by train to Marseille where we were gathered. There were about 1,000 of us passengers, many of them young people. The ship was a real immigration ship. In the freight room they had set up bunk beds to accommodate everyone. I was alone and had thirst for adventure.

It was a wonderful journey. It took a month to reach Melbourne. The ship had to be repaired for a week in between; everyone was flustered but it didn't bother me. One more week at sea, I thought. I really enjoyed the trip.

My father picked me up from the port in Melbourne. I recognized him immediately; though he probably didn't recognize me, since I was eleven when he left me. He hadn't changed much. It was a reunion with many tears. We both cried a lot.

From Melbourne we went by train for two hours to Castlemaine, the place where my father was living back then. In Castlemaine there was a cinema, multiple tennis courts and schools. My father taught math at one of the schools.

He lived in a small house with a garden together with a woman he later married. I got my own room and a room he had set up as a laboratory. My father researched crystals. He was able to crystalize metal. Up until then no one thought it was possible.

At that time you could only make crystal forms out of salts. But no one knew what to do with this discovery back then. Only since television is there a point to these crystals.

Castlemain was a typical English town. The people had lived there in peace for a long time. They had no idea about life-threatening situations and I found them all boring. My father wasn't boring, of course, but he had to work. His friends looked after me well. But I was really bored.

I still wanted to study medicine, but in order to do so I would have had to go to a boarding school – they were tied together. You also had to pay for your studies and the boarding school cost a lot of money, which my father couldn't afford. I couldn't study there.

My father and I thought about it – since you could train for a lot of wonderful careers – but I only wanted to study medicine. We looked into how it might be possible, but if fell through because of lack of funds.

My father would have had to finance it for many years, since it's such a long program. I didn't want to stay in Australia without a study program, since everyone could study for free in Vienna. So I decided to go back in order to study.

There was no Joint for me back in Vienna. My father had taken out a loan in order to pay for the return trip. He was very sad, but he understood. I never saw him again, but we were always in touch and he always sent me a gift on my birthday. I always sent him books about crystals. My father died in Australia at the age of 85.

My husband was disappointed that I came back, since he would have really liked to live in Australia. Even though the ship went as far as Genoa, he came to pick me up in Naples and we took the train together to Vienna.

I could then immediately continue with my studies. I had lost a year, but many of my classmates hadn't passed the first exams in Chemistry and Physics, so they weren't much further along than me. I was able to successfully study and at some point we decided to get married.

But my husband didn't have Austrian citizenship, so if I had married him I would have become stateless. I needed to apply for a retention of my citizenship, which took time. The next hurdle was that, amongst Jews, there was a kind of unwritten law that when there are sisters, they need to get married first. Three of his sisters were married but one of them wasn't. So he wanted to wait until she was also married.

Dora finally met a young man in Briancon who she married. Then we got married at the registrar's office on Waehringer-Strasse. Back then there was only one Orthodox rabbi in the 2nd district and he married us according to Jewish law. I wore white with a veil, but the veil wasn't enough for the Orthodox rabbi.

They threw another white scarf over me so that you could really see nothing. It was all very traditional – with circling seven times and my husband signed the ketubah. Our wedding was one of the first Jewish weddings in Vienna. Many of my students were there. I still meet with one of them today and whenever he sees me, he says: I will never forget your wedding.

When I was married, my mother said: I am giving you the apartment, what do I need with all these rooms to myself. I didn't want that, I was still a student. I wanted to study, not clean floors. I couldn't even cook. But my husband wanted it – he liked the apartment, of course. So I complied.

My mother moved in with her husband on Josefstaedter-Strasse – they were married in 1946 – and handed the apartment over to us. When we were doing better financially, we had a maid. But that didn't actually suit me, since I had never lived like that; I didn't grow up like that. In the apartment we bought on the Semmering, which was very small, we were comfortable. We felt so comfortable precisely because it was so small.

My daughter Viola was born in 1955. What a joy! So many miracles took place because of Viola. It was so lovely that I even began familiarizing myself with the kitchen. I had interrupted my studies so that I could do everything with her.

A year and a half later I was pregnant again – the second child was a boy. Another great joy! Shortly after the birth someone told me there was something wrong with the child. He was born with a congenital heart defect and only lived for four months.

It was so horrible that I've never been able to recover from this shock. I was just sad, incredibly sad. But I still had my young daughter, Viola, so I had to pull myself together somehow. With all my energy I managed to live. It was horrible for my child to be with a mother who was always sad. That was very, very difficult and it surely has an effect on my daughter to this day.

I was a depressive mother for six years. My mother-in-law came once from France to visit. Many years later she told me that I always wore the same thing and never smiled back then. I was just living, nothing more. I could not recover from the shock over the death of my child.

I didn't want to study anymore. My husband also suffered, but he had also great success in his career during those years. He didn't allow himself any vacation time, since he had to earn money for us. He was always working, even Saturdays and Sundays.

I think Viola was already in the second grade when we both went on a ship voyage to Algeria during the school holidays. That's the sort of thing that always attracted me. That was the first step on the road to recovery.

We came back after fourteen days and I felt a bit better, was able to adjust again. For all those years my mother had told me I should keep studying, since I had almost reached the end of my studies, but I wasn't able. I could no longer see the point of studying.

A year later Viola and I took a boat trip down the Danube. We went along the Danube to the Black Sea, then transferred to a large ship and took it to Crimea. That was a magnificent voyage and we had a wonderful vacation in Crimea. There I saw why the Black Sea is called the Black Sea. They rocks leading up to the sea are dark grey there.

The trip brought me out of my depression. I was still doing well on the way back and thought *now I'll gather myself together and finish my studies*. My husband had put together an application to the university and –– despite the long break for obvious reasons – they let me continue with my studies without having to retake the exams.

I began studying again and my husband gave me a lot of support. He was second to none! Then I passed the first exam with honors. Then came one exam after the other – no more honors, but I was happy to slip through. Then I finished my studies. My daughter Viola was at my graduation. She was ten years old. My mother was also there. She was very pleased.

Back then it was the case that they scrambled to get the graduates, since there weren't enough doctors. They told me at once that I should go to the AKH [*Allgemeine Krankenhaus der Stadt Wien – General Hospital of the City of Vienna – the university hospital, the largest hospital in Vienna*]. First I was in the ENT department of the AKH.

I had no clue and had arrived with illusions. I had imagined wonderful doctors and good relationships with the patients, diagnosing, and so on. The AKH was an establishment with obsessively ambitious people. It went so far as everyone viewing each other as competition.

The ENT department had a roof garden where I went every day and almost cried. The good relationship between doctors and patients didn't exist. The doctors also didn't explain anything to a newcomer like me. Everyone just wanted to keep each other down.

And this hierarchy: when you get around to a patient, go first to the professor, then to lecturer, then to the senior physician, etc. I was curious and inquisitive – I wanted to hear everything from the patient and see what the professor said and did.

So I went ahead and the senior nurse pulled me back immediately. I completed the months there and thought, if that's the medicine I fought so hard for, then it's not for me. But I also thought it might be different at another hospital.

So I left the AKH even though there was a very good professor in the children's ward who told me I should maybe specialize in pediatric medicine. But I was so afraid of the AKH that I didn't want to do the training in pediatric medicine there.

My next hospital was the Kaiser Franz Josef Hospital and my next department was with internal medicine. You had to stay for nine months and it was very, very different there.

There was a senior physician there who put in the effort to teach me everything an internist needed to be able to do. That was terrific for me. I also made the effort to learn everything that a doctor needed. To the patients I was the young Doctor – which also improved my self-confidence.

There was a professor there researching gout. Back then gout was an illness that people in Austria had no idea about. My sister had a sister in New York who had immigrated before the war. He wrote to her and she sent me a long report about gout. I went with this knowledge to the professor of internal medicine and he was impressed.

In America there was already medicine for gout, since gout is a very painful illness. That was a big deal for Vienna. There was also a different dynamic between doctors and patients at the Kaiser Franz Josef Hospital. The doctors spoke to the patients and also looked after them emotionally.

Even the colleagues didn't want bite one another outright, since they were happy that I could take on some of their work. I went through all the departments until my internship was complete. I was there for around five years.

In 1968 my daughter Monika was born. I was working in the Barmherzige Brueder Hospital at the time. Then we arranged for a nursemaid.

My husband grew up very religiously, but through fate deviated from his strict religiosity. It was financially impossible for us to keep kosher and observe the Sabbath. Our living conditions in Vienna were such that we couldn't live religiously. Even his siblings deviated from the strict religious life. Now I would really like to be traditional.

My husband taught me a number of things. Every now and then we lit candles on Friday and went to temple for the holidays. We had begun performing Seder when I was still very young. It was very modest at first, but once my daughter Monika was born we had a real Seder with a lot of guests, even non-Jewish guests. And I got everything ready in line with tradition – the appetizers, the gefillte fish, the ground liver.

My daughters thus grew up traditionally. They were the only Jewish children at their respective schools. For the first four years Viola went to school on Albert-Gasse, then to high school on Piaristen-Gasse. The Piaristen High School was a catholic school – Viola couldn't last because of the anti-Semitic behavior of the teachers and students. I then registered her at the school on Kundmann-Gasse in the 3rd district. The atmosphere there was completely different there and that's where she completed her exams.

When Viola was 20 years old she moved to the 5th district. We had a house there and Viola wanted to be independent. My husband set up the apartment like she wanted it. Viola is artistic and very imaginative. She was already painting back then and even had her pictures shown.

Actually, for her entire life she's wanted to irrigate the Sahara. That's why she began studying at the University for Natural Resources and Life Sciences. There she came across a pronounced Nazi milieu and left after a week.  Then she didn't know what she should study.

She let the course record book decide and landed on journalism. After that she studied journalism and completed her doctorate. Then she worked for many years as a journalist at different newspapers.

After about ten years she looked for something new, since she didn't agree with a lot of things. Her knowledge is great, as well as her artistic talents – so she had a lot of options. Then she worked with a lawyer. After seven years of intensive work with this lawyer she went to Israel.

She arrived in Israel with all the illusions we had put in her head: our homeland, the country we belong to, where there are no anti-Semites, where so many things – that still need to be dealt with here – are taken for granted.

What we hadn't taken into consideration was that her generation in Israel had already experienced a lot of war, that they'd had a difficult education. These young people were born in the country and were formed by the constant threat on their lives. And it was and is still a fight for survival in Israel. But Viola found a large circle of friends in Israel. She lived in Israel for five years, then she met a French couple and relocated to France, to the French Riviera.

She rented an apartment in the mountains, very close to Nice. That was wonderful for me. I had visited her every year in Israel and now I could go to France every year. It was beautiful there. She learned French, which was easier for her than Hebrew, and, after five or six years in France where she worked as a journalist for Viennese newspapers, she couldn't take the coldness of the French any longer. She couldn't manage to find a real group of friends. She took a class with a rabbi and played golf in order to meet people. She met an American couple, a Jewish couple, but no French people. She felt lonely and came back to Vienna.

It surely wasn't easy for her to come back. But she had a lot of friends from school and work and made new friends. So she lasted in Vienna for about five years. Then she was called to Israel by a friend who wanted her help supervising the construction of her house, since she could contribute her knowledge and skills. Because she had lived in Israel for so long, she went without illusions, and this time she liked that the people are how they are – individual, opinionated, loud, and combative.

They are outgoing people that will pump a complete stranger as far as their shoe size. That's part of it: they're also interested in the other's shoe size. Human contact in Israel is incomparable to any other country in this world. Non-Jewish friends don't understand how sensitively I react when someone says something against Israel.

I am already going ballistic and the other person has no idea they had said something to offend me. Of course it's hypersensitive.  I know it, but I can't let it go. I know that you can also say negative things about Israel – where won't you find something negative – but not to me, please.

After a year Viola came back to get her things in order to relocate to Israel again. Her Israeli friends were glad.

For some time she's been living for a half a year in Israel and for the other half in Vienna. My daughter is now working for a real-estate journal.

Monika, my younger daughter, I sent immediately to the Lycee [*French school*]. It's an international crowd. There were children there from other European countries – French children, of course, and also Jewish children. Even the teachers were different.

After her exams she studied for a while, got married, and had her first child early – Lilli is now 23. She and her husband moved to the countryside, close to Graz. Her husband had a job offer in Graz. The apartments in Graz were too expensive, so they looked around nearby and were able to rent the bottom floor of a house.

Later the owner of the houses didn't want to rent anymore, so they found a piece of property and put a lovely prefab house on it. Monika wanted to offer her children a real home – that meant a home, a yard, and a dog. That was very important to her. When the children were young they also had a cat and guinea pigs.

Everything was finished, from the basement to the roof, in half a year. Monika had her son Moritz – he's 20 now. The yard is big and beautiful. There is nothing where they live – just a few farmsteads.

When their children were young there were also neighborhood children – that was great as they were growing up. When the children were a bit older my daughter began teaching French at a Waldorf School. She could bring her children; that was ideal.

Monika's husband and his partner organize conferences for doctors. He has to pick the topic, invite the doctors, invite the speakers, find the location. The conferences take place four to five times a year. They are big conferences with up to 1,000 people.

My daughter lives amongst farmers and is very happy with her life. She comes to the city to visit me multiple times a year. I love the city – you can see, hear, and visit so many lovely things. My daughter is happy whenever she can go back to the country. The noise, the dust… she can't stand it. I think until two years ago, she never went on vacation. The children, the yard, the dog…

When her son Moritz was 12 he said he wanted to have a Bar Mitzvah. There is no rabbi in Graz since there aren't enough Jews living there. But there was a man Moritz could study with - a whole year. This child, who had a very ambivalent relation to studying, really went every week for a year and studied everything for his Bar Mitzvah. When it was time, Pauli [*Paul Chaim Eisenberg, the chief rabbi of the Jewish Community of Vienna*] came from Vienna to Graz and it was one of the nicest Bar Mitzvahs I ever saw – with so much humor. Pauli sang and danced and Moritz had a wonderful party.

I really lived traveling. My husband I were in New York, Brazil, and almost everywhere in Europe. I would have liked to travel more, but since my husband worked so hard, he sometimes wanted to just rest on his vacations.

My husband died in 1995 at the age of 75. Much too early. I've been living alone ever since.

I live nicely and comfortably in Austria. I've seen a bit of the world and you won't find such a comfortable life or better social coverage anywhere else. If you need to get a new passport you

don’t have to line up. But it’s not just the social security; everything is easy here in Austria.

You take a number and are seen in ten minutes. When you submit your pension, everything runs smoothly and without a fuss. There is a nice atmosphere and the cultural events are terrific. There are a lot of cultural events for free.

As Haider got 25 percent of the vote, my daughter Viola wasn’t in Austria. My younger daughter Monika feels secure in Austria. I can remember that before 1938 people also felt secure in Austria. I don’t think that people have changed much.

It always depends on the situation: they’re good when they’re doing well and they’re bad when they’re doing poorly. There are many people that appropriated everything. No one came to reclaim it.

The families were either murdered or died somewhere else before they could get their property back. I personally don’t trust anyone. But I’m too old and too weak to go anywhere else, even if the right-wing party continues to get stronger.

I always think that I’m different than others. But that’s no surprise after everything I experienced.

- **Post-scripts**:

*1 In 1990 Reinhold Duschka was recognized as a Righteous Among the Nations* [an honorific for gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust]. *The honor came so late because Duschka was afraid of the people’s anti-Semitism after the war, since even in post-war Austria it was not popular to have saved Jews. Duschka still needed to work many years and was afraid of losing his customers.*

*2 On 11 April 2013 Austria also recognized Reinhold Duschka for the heroic deed for which he jeopardized his life for four years. A memorial plaque was placed at Gumpendorfer Strasse 8a, the house where he hid Dr. Lucia Heilmann and her mother for years.*